## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA ALEXANDRIA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA . Criminal No. 1:20mj114

.

vs. . Alexandria, Virginia

March 20, 2020

ZACKARY ELLIS SANDERS, . 2:16 p.m.

.

Defendant.

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. . . . . . . . . . . .

TRANSCRIPT OF INITIAL APPEARANCE, PRELIMINARY HEARING,
AND DETENTION HEARING
BEFORE THE HONORABLE JOHN F. ANDERSON
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

## APPEARANCES:

FOR THE GOVERNMENT: WILLIAM G. CLAYMAN, AUSA

United States Attorney's Office

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FOR THE DEFENDANT: STEVEN J. MC COOL, ESQ.

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U.S. District Court, Third Floor

401 Courthouse Square Alexandria, VA 22314

(703)299-8595

(Pages 1 - 25)

(Proceedings recorded by electronic sound recording, transcript produced by computerized transcription.)

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1	<u>I</u> <u>N</u> <u>D</u> <u>E</u> <u>X</u>					
2		DIRECT	CBUGG	REDIRECT	RECROSS	
3	WITNESS ON BEHALF OF	DIRECT	CROSS	<u>KEDIKECI</u>	RECROSS	
4	THE GOVERNMENT:					
5	SA Jeremy Obie	6	8			
6						
7	WITNESS ON BEHALF OF THE DEFENDANT:					
8	Dr. Risa Edwards Sanders	18	19	21		
9						
10						
11		EXHIBITS	5			
12			<u>-</u> MARKED	RF.C	EIVED	
13	GOVERNMENT'S:			<u>1410</u>	<u></u>	
14	No. 1				8	
15					J	
16						
17						
18						
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20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						

preliminary hearing and detention hearing?

24

25

MR. MC COOL: We have, and, Your Honor, I'm prepared

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5
     to go today both on probable cause and on detention, and just
 1
 2
     given the, the health risks that are out there, I'd urge the
 3
     government to move forward today, even if it has to be later
 4
     today. I mean, we've had notice of these charges for just a
 5
     couple hours and are ready to go, and I'd like to do so now if
     possible.
 6
 7
               THE COURT: Okay. Is the agent here? It's a
 8
    presumption case, right?
 9
               MR. MC COOL: Yes.
10
               MR. CLAYMAN: Yes, Your Honor.
11
               THE COURT: So, okay.
12
                             The agent is present.
               MR. CLAYMAN:
13
               THE COURT: Okay. Why don't we go ahead and have the
14
     agent come in, have him sworn in. He can have the affidavit
15
     that is filed in support of the criminal complaint admitted,
     and then subject to any cross-examination that's necessary,
16
17
     okay? I mean, I've reviewed the affidavit that was filed in
18
     support of the criminal complaint, so --
               MR. MC COOL: I understand, Your Honor.
19
20
               THE COURT: -- we can proceed that way, if that's
21
     acceptable.
22
               MR. CLAYMAN: Yes, Your Honor.
23
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
24
               MR. MC COOL: May my client be seated, sir?
25
               THE COURT: Yes.
                                 I'm sorry, you may be seated now.
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Obie - Direct
                                                                    6
 1
     Thank you.
 2
               MR. CLAYMAN: Your Honor, the United States would
 3
     call Special Agent Jeremy Obie.
 4
               THE COURT: Thank you.
 5
               SA JEREMY OBIE, GOVERNMENT'S WITNESS, SWORN
 6
                            DIRECT EXAMINATION
 7
     BY MR. CLAYMAN:
 8
          Can you please state your name and spell it for the
 9
     record.
10
          Jeremy Obie, J-e-r-e-m-y O-b-i-e.
     Α.
11
         How are you employed?
     0.
12
         As a special agent with the FBI.
     Α.
13
         And how long have you been employed in that position?
14
        Since March of 2016.
     Α.
15
          Are you the primary agent or one of the agents assigned to
     the matter in court today, the United States versus Zackary
16
17
     Sanders?
18
        Yes, sir.
     Α.
          In the course of your duties, did you have an opportunity
19
20
     to encounter Zackary Sanders?
21
         Yes, sir.
     Α.
22
        And do you see Mr. Sanders in the courtroom today?
23
         Yes, sir.
     Α.
24
          Would you please identify him by what he's wearing and
25
     where he's sitting?
```

Obie - Direct 7

- 1 A. He is sitting by the defense counsel, wearing a black
- 2 | T-shirt with multi-colored squares.
- 3 MR. CLAYMAN: Your Honor, may the record reflect that
- 4 | the witness has identified the defendant?
- 5 THE COURT: Yes. Mr. Sanders has been identified.
- 6 BY MR. CLAYMAN:
- 7 Q. Did you prepare an affidavit in support of a criminal
- 8 | complaint in this matter?
- 9 A. Yes, sir.
- 10 Q. With the assistance of the court security officer, I'll
- 11 pass up the affidavit, which I provided a copy to defense
- 12 | counsel.
- Do you recognize this?
- 14 A. Yes, sir.
- 15 | Q. What is it?
- 16 A. It is the criminal complaint and affidavit that I wrote
- 17 up.
- 18 Q. And is that your signature on the last page?
- 19 A. Yes, sir.
- 20 0. Is the information contained in the affidavit a true and
- 21 | accurate reflection of the facts as known at the time the
- 22 affidavit was executed?
- 23 A. Yes, sir.
- 24 Q. And do you have any corrections or clarifications that you
- 25 | would like to make to it at this time?

```
Obie - Cross
                                                                    8
         No, sir.
 1
    Α.
 2
     Q. And for the purpose of today's hearing, do you incorporate
 3
     and adopt the facts as set forth in the affidavit as part of
 4
    your testimony?
 5
    A.
          I do.
 6
               MR. CLAYMAN: At this time, Your Honor, the
     government would move to admit the criminal complaint affidavit
 7
 8
     into the record.
 9
               THE COURT: Any objection?
10
               MR. MC COOL: No, sir.
11
               THE COURT: I'll admit that as Government's Exhibit
12
    No. 1.
13
               (Government's Exhibit No. 1 was received in
14
     evidence.)
15
               MR. CLAYMAN: Nothing further as to probable cause,
16
     Your Honor.
17
               THE COURT: Thank you. Okay.
18
               MR. MC COOL: May I proceed, Your Honor?
               THE COURT: Yes, please.
19
20
               MR. MC COOL: Thank you, Your Honor.
21
                           CROSS-EXAMINATION
22
    BY MR. MC COOL:
23
          Good afternoon, Agent. Sir, do you have the copy of the
24
     affidavit in front of you?
25
     A. Yes, sir.
```

Obie - Cross 9

- 1 Q. Can I direct your attention, if I could, to paragraph 5?
- 2 And can you read that to yourself, and when you've finished,
- 3 | could you look up, please?
- 4 Now, that paragraph 5, you correctly defined the term
- 5 "minor" as defined under the U.S. Code as someone under the age
- 6 of 18, correct?
- 7 A. Correct.
- 8 Q. And this case purportedly involves video depictions of a
- 9 | 14-year-old; is that right?
- 10 A. Correct.
- 11 Q. Okay. Can -- let me direct your attention first to
- 12 paragraph 9. Could you read that to yourself, sir?
- In paragraph 9, you wrote that a certain IP address
- 14 | was used to access a website that you affirmed to be known as a
- 15 | website that was used to advertise child pornography; is that
- 16 | correct?
- 17 A. Correct.
- 18 Q. Have you viewed that website?
- 19 A. Yes, sir.
- 20 Q. Okay. Isn't it true that at the, at the opening page of
- 21 | that website, that it says that you must be 18 or over to
- 22 access the website?
- 23 A. I believe so, yes, sir.
- 24 Q. Okay. And it also says that that website will be -- is
- 25 monitored; isn't it true?

Obie - Cross

- 1 A. Which -- so you're --
- 2 Q. So the, the website that you're referring to here, one
- 3 | that's purportedly advertised as child pornography, it's your
- 4 testimony, as you just stated, that on the opening page, it
- 5 says clearly that you must be 18 or over to access that
- 6 | website, correct?
- 7 A. The dark web website?
- 8 Q. The one that you referred to in paragraph 9. I'm not
- 9 asking you to read paragraph 9. I'm asking you, having read
- 10 that, to focus on my question. It was your testimony a moment
- 11 ago that you actually went and observed that website, correct?
- 12 A. I have observed that website, yes, sir.
- 13 Q. Okay. And you also testified that in observing that
- 14 | website, it stated clearly therein that you had to be 18 or
- over to access the website; isn't that true?
- 16 A. They want you to be, but you don't have to be.
- 17 | O. I understand that, but that warning is posted, correct?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. All right. And it also posted on the website that that
- 20 | website is monitored, correct? Do you recall seeing that?
- 21 A. I don't recall at the moment.
- 22 Q. Okay. Can I direct your attention to paragraph 19? Can
- 23 you read that to yourself, and when you've finished, could you
- 24 | please look up so that I know that you've finished?
- 25 THE COURT: Do you want him to read the whole

```
Obie - Cross
                                                                   11
 1
     paragraph? I mean, it's two pages long.
 2
               MR. MC COOL: It is, Your Honor.
               THE COURT: Is there any particulatr part of it that
 3
 4
     you need to be aware of?
 5
               MR. MC COOL: Sure.
               THE COURT: This is a transcript of a, you know, chat
 6
 7
     apparently.
 8
               MR. MC COOL: It is, Your Honor, and I apologize. I
 9
     thought that just given that it was a chat, that it would be --
10
     I can focus in, if I may.
11
          Page 9, if you could look where Minor, Minor 1 purportedly
12
     states, "I've never been shaved"; is that correct?
13
          Yes, sir.
     Α.
14
          And there are references throughout the affidavit of this
15
     person that purportedly is a 14-year-old had pubic hair; is
16
     that correct?
17
          Correct.
     Α.
18
          All right. Is there anywhere in the affidavit showing
19
     that you or anyone else at the FBI reviewed a government-issued
20
     ID or a passport or anything like that that determined whether
21
     or not this individual who purportedly is 14 was actually under
22
     the age of 18?
23
          We have not viewed any material as such.
24
               MR. MC COOL: All right. Nothing further on probable
25
     cause, Your Honor.
```

```
Obie - Cross
                                                                   12
 1
               THE COURT: Okay.
 2
               MR. MC COOL: I move to -- I move -- it's my position
 3
     that there is no probable cause here.
 4
               THE COURT: Well, and what would be the basis for
 5
     that given the affidavit in support of the criminal complaint
     in which this chat said that the person they're discussing says
 6
 7
     that that person is 14 years or under?
               MR. MC COOL: Well --
 8
 9
               THE COURT: Isn't that probable cause?
10
               MR. MC COOL: It's our view that it isn't, Your
11
    Honor, because it simply --
12
               THE COURT: All right. Well, it's, it's my
13
    determination.
14
               MR. MC COOL: -- it could be an instance of
15
     role-playing.
16
               Yes, sir. And, I'm sorry, I didn't want to talk over
17
     Your Honor.
18
               THE COURT: Well, I mean, there is the person who has
    been communicating, saying that they're 14.
19
20
               A VOICE: May I --
21
               MR. MC COOL: No, you cannot.
22
               THE COURT: No, you can't.
23
               MR. MC COOL: That's true, Your Honor. That's in the
24
     affidavit, but --
25
               THE COURT: Okay.
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Obie - Cross
                                                                   13
 1
               MR. MC COOL: -- it's our position that the code
 2
     requires more.
 3
               It requires that the person actually be under the age
 4
     of 18, and this at most shows role play is, is our position.
 5
               THE COURT: Okay.
               MR. MC COOL: It does not make out probable cause to
 6
 7
     make out a violation of the statute --
 8
               THE COURT: Okay.
 9
               MR. MC COOL: -- as charged.
10
               THE COURT: All right. You can step down. I don't
11
     need to hear any more from you.
12
                              (Witness excused.)
13
               THE COURT: Any other argument on probable cause?
14
               MR. MC COOL: No. That's what I have, Your Honor.
15
               THE COURT: Sir, stand. Sir, I've reviewed the
16
     affidavit that's been filed in support of a criminal complaint.
17
     It's clear based on the affidavit -- and this is not proving a
18
     case beyond a reasonable doubt. It's whether there is at least
19
     probable cause for the charge that's been brought against you.
20
     There certainly is probable cause on the charge that's been
21
     brought against you, so the case is going to be proceeding as
22
     charged, based on the information that's contained in the
23
     affidavit concerning your conduct and communications with this
24
     individual and everything else that's in the affidavit.
25
               So do you make any argument on detention?
```

```
14
 1
               MR. MC COOL: Yes. May I?
 2
               THE COURT: Okay. Yes.
 3
                             Thank you, Your Honor. May I proceed?
               MR. CLAYMAN:
 4
               THE COURT: Please.
 5
               MR. MC COOL: Thank you, sir. Your Honor, under
     3142, as, as the Court well knows, a person shall be released
 6
 7
     unless it is found that he is a danger to the community or
 8
     likely to flee, and that detention will only be ordered in
 9
     those cases where there are no combination of conditions of
10
     release that would reasonably assure the safety of the
11
     community or my client's appearance.
12
               And the Supreme Court in Salerno has made clear
13
     that --
14
               THE COURT: Isn't this a presumption case?
15
               MR. MC COOL: It is, Your Honor, and I --
16
               THE COURT: Well, then it's your duty to overcome
17
     that presumption by giving me evidence before I even get to
18
     that part of the analysis, all right?
               MR. MC COOL: That's right. It does fall under
19
20
     3142(e), Your Honor. We recognize that, and it is a
21
     presumption case. And still, you know, courts have found that
22
     it's not a heavy burden to meet, and looking at the 3142
23
     factors, we submit that there is evidence to rebut the
24
    presumption.
25
               The nature of the charges, Your Honor, they're
```

clearly disturbing and upsetting. They are just that, charges at this point.

While Your Honor has, has not accepted our probable cause argument, I think in terms of, of recognizing or looking at the nature and circumstances of the case, that it is one that raises some concern whether or not the government will be able to make its burden of proof at trial, and that it's not simply just role-playing here.

My client's history and characteristics favor a release. He was born and raised in Virginia. He graduated from high school here in 2013. He graduated from the New York University with a degree in drama. He's had no history of violence, no history of drug or alcohol use. I think the evidence would show that he's a victim of intense bullying as he was growing up.

He lives with his parents, Dr. Jay Sanders and Dr. Risa Sanders. Both are here in, in court, are willing to serve as third-party custodians.

Your Honor, any -- he has no criminal history at all.

Any danger to the community can be mitigated, we would submit, through the travel restrictions, avoiding contact with alleged victims, reporting regularly to pretrial, and curfew, electronic monitoring. Any of those conditions would work, Your Honor.

I think also, if I may, Your Honor, particularly in

```
16
 1
     these times, if I could through the -- may I pass up exhibits
 2
     I'd like to refer to --
 3
               THE COURT: Sure.
 4
               MR. MC COOL: -- in the next part of my argument?
 5
               Oh, Your Honor, you know what? I think what I've
     done is I've sent a bunch of copies of the first exhibit and
 6
 7
    not -- or the fourth exhibit and not all of them.
 8
     readjust here?
 9
               THE COURT: Okay.
10
               MR. MC COOL: Let me see that whole stack. Thanks, I
11
     appreciate it.
12
               Sorry, Your Honor. And then Your Honor has multiple
13
     copies of Exhibit 4. Here you go.
14
               I think we need -- here you go. Here you go. That's
15
    No. 1 for His Honor and for counsel.
16
               THE COURT: I've got 1, 2, 3, and 4.
17
               MR. MC COOL: Yes, sir. Thank you so much. I
18
     appreciate your patience.
19
               Your Honor, what I have before the Court are a number
20
     of reports and articles that are -- that speak to the
21
     coronavirus and how it's surging not only just across our
22
     country but particularly in the, in the prison populations, and
23
     Virginia alone has reported 114 cases, as stated in these, in
24
     these articles.
25
               And Exhibit 4 speaks about our criminal system
```

MR. MC COOL: Yeah.

THE COURT: I'll make a determination.

24

25

## Sanders - Direct 18

- DR. RISA EDWARDS SANDERS, DEFENDANT'S WITNESS, SWORN
- 2 DIRECT EXAMINATION
- 3 BY MR. MC COOL:
- 4 Q. Good afternoon, ma'am.
- 5 A. Hello.
- 6 Q. Could you please state your full name and spell your name
- 7 | for the court reporter, please.
- 8 A. Risa, R-i-s-a, Edwards Sanders.
- 9 Q. All right. And what is your profession, ma'am?
- 10 A. I'm a licensed clinical psychologist.
- 11 Q. And do you live in, in Virginia?
- 12 A. Yes, I do.
- 13 Q. All right. And is that a residential home, without
- 14 | stating your address?
- 15 A. Yes, it is.
- 16 Q. All right. And do you recognize Zackary Sanders here?
- 17 A. Yes, I do.
- 18 Q. Could you tell His Honor who -- what's your relationship
- 19 to Zackary Sanders?
- 20 A. I'm Zack's mom.
- 21 Q. Okay. And who lives at your home?
- 22 A. My husband and I and Zack.
- 23 | Q. Okay. And do you -- and does anyone else live there?
- 24 A. No.
- 25 Q. All right. Anyone under the age of 18 visit your home?

Sanders - Cross 19

- 1 A. No.
- 2 Q. All right. Would you, would you be willing to act as a
- 3 third-party custodian for, for your son?
- 4 A. Yes, I would.
- 5 Q. All right. Would you be willing to have him
- 6 | electronically monitored at your home?
- 7 A. Yes, I would.
- 8 Q. And would you, would you take steps to assure the Court
- 9 that your son did not have access to the internet while he's at
- 10 his home?
- 11 A. Yes, I will.
- MR. MC COOL: All right. That's all I have on
- 13 direct, Your Honor.
- 14 THE COURT: Very well. Cross-examine her.
- 15 CROSS-EXAMINATION
- 16 BY MR. CLAYMAN:
- 17 O. Good afternoon.
- 18 A. Hello.
- 19 Q. How long has Zackary Sanders lived with you?
- 20 A. Well, almost all of his life other than when he went to
- 21 college.
- 22 Q. And most recently, how long has he lived with you?
- 23 A. I think it's been maybe two years.
- Q. So in, in November of 2019, he was living with you; is
- 25 that right?

```
Sanders - Cross
                                                                   20
          I have, I have to think about that. I know that he
 1
 2
     graduated from college in May of 2017, so probably, yes.
 3
          And if you had to guess --
 4
               THE COURT: We're talking about the time period of
 5
     October and November of 2019 to the present. So this is last
 6
    year.
               THE WITNESS: I think so. Yes, Your Honor.
 8
               THE COURT: Well --
 9
               THE WITNESS: Yes.
10
               THE COURT: I'm sorry.
11
               THE WITNESS: Sorry.
12
               THE COURT: It hasn't been that long. Has he been
13
     living with you for the past six months?
14
               THE WITNESS: Yes.
15
               THE COURT: Well, why, why is there any hesitation
     when we ask October 2019 to the present?
16
17
               THE WITNESS: I'm just a --
18
               THE COURT: You seem to be confused.
19
               THE WITNESS: No. I'm just trying to remember when
20
    he graduated from college and then moved back to this area. So
21
     I'm just trying to do the math in my head. I'm sorry, I'm just
22
     a little nervous.
23
               THE COURT: Okay.
24
     BY MR. CLAYMAN:
25
          And if you had to guess, approximately how many electronic
     Ο.
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```
Sanders - Redirect
                                                                   21
 1
     devices capable of accessing the internet do you have in your
 2
    home?
 3
          Counting all my husband's and mine?
 4
     Ο.
         Yes.
 5
          I have three; my husband has two; and, and Zack has a
     Smartphone.
 6
 7
               MR. CLAYMAN: Okay. Nothing further.
 8
               THE WITNESS:
                             Six. Sorry.
 9
               MR. CLAYMAN: Nothing further, Your Honor.
10
               THE COURT: Okay.
11
               MR. MC COOL: Briefly, Your Honor? May I redirect?
12
               THE COURT: Sure.
13
               MR. MC COOL: Thank you.
14
                          REDIRECT EXAMINATION
15
    BY MR. MC COOL:
16
        Dr. Sanders, would you be willing to assure the Court that
17
     you would secure any devices that would allow your son to
18
    have -- gain access to the internet if he was released into
19
     your custody?
20
          Absolutely. I mean, my devices are not accessible to
21
     anyone anyway because I am in a profession that requires HIPAA
22
     compliance, so no one goes near my devices, and same for my
23
    husband. I don't see where that would be a challenge at all to
24
     secure those devices.
25
               THE COURT: Okay.
```

```
Sanders - Redirect
                                                                   22
 1
               MR. MC COOL: Thank you, Your Honor. That's all I --
 2
     that's all I have.
 3
               THE COURT: Okay. You may step down. You may step
 4
     down.
           Thank you.
 5
               THE WITNESS: Thank you.
                              (Witness excused.)
 6
 7
               THE COURT: Okay. Any other offers of evidence or
 8
     argument you want to make on the issue of detention?
 9
               MR. MC COOL: No, Your Honor. I would just proffer
10
     that if, if Dr. Jay Sanders was, was called as a witness, that
11
    he would testify similar to his wife, and if Your Honor would
12
     accept that proffer --
13
               THE COURT: Okay.
14
               MR. MC COOL: -- then I will forgo calling him as a
15
     witness.
16
               THE COURT: All right. So help me understand now
17
     that we know a little bit more about his parents and that he
18
     was living in that house with his parents, how we can be
     assured that he wouldn't continue the same conduct that he was
19
20
     doing while he was living in the house with his parents.
21
               MR. MC COOL: Well, I think, Your Honor, through
22
     Pretrial Services and through other, you know, mechanisms of
23
     securing devices, I mean, the, the FBI has seized most of the
24
     electronics that were in the house. Those that remain are,
25
     are -- belong to the, Dr. Jay Sanders and Dr. Risa Sanders, and
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they would secure those devices.
```

He wouldn't have any access to the internet. He could be on electronic monitoring. He could remain in the home all day. He wouldn't be out in the community, and it would assure his appearance in court, and it would alleviate any danger that he may have to the community.

THE COURT: Okay. Sir, would you please stand?

Sir, you've been charged with a very serious offense, one in which is disturbing in its nature and scope. Having found that there is probable cause for the charged offense, not just on that one instance but references to other similar type messages and communications that you've been having for an extended period of time, I don't find that there's any single condition or combination of conditions that I would reasonably be assured that the safety of the community could be taken care of.

I don't think you've overcome the presumption. The mere fact that, you know, you have an education and that you have parents that you were living with in which you were able to conduct this conduct in your home under their supervision at the time certainly doesn't overcome the presumption in my mind.

So I'm going to require you to remain in custody pending further proceedings in this matter, okay? Thank you.

Thank you, counsel.

MR. MC COOL: Your Honor, may I be -- may I address

MR. MC COOL: Yes, Your Honor. I just --

25

```
25
 1
               THE COURT: Okay? Yeah.
 2
               MR. MC COOL: I'm sorry to bother the Court with it.
 3
               THE COURT: No, that's, that's -- I'm sorry, I wish I
 4
     could help more, but --
 5
               MR. MC COOL: Yes, sir.
               THE COURT: -- they're the ones who are going to be
 6
 7
     supervising him.
 8
               MR. MC COOL: All right.
 9
               THE COURT: Okay?
10
               MR. MC COOL: I appreciate being heard.
11
               THE COURT: Thank you.
12
               MR. MC COOL: Thank you.
13
               THE COURT: All right.
14
               MR. MC COOL: Your Honor, may I be excused?
15
               THE COURT: Yes, please.
16
               MR. MC COOL: Thank you, sir.
17
               THE COURT: Thank you.
18
                              (Which were all the proceedings
                               had at this time.)
19
20
                       CERTIFICATE OF THE TRANSCRIBER
21
          I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from
22
     the official electronic sound recording of the proceedings in
23
     the above-entitled matter.
24
25
                                         Anneliese J.
                                                      Thomson
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